New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

News Release

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N.B. Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission sets goals for upcoming year (05/09/28)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission updated its strategic plan for the next year and made a public presentation during a recent meeting in Tracadie-Sheila.

Rose-Marie Curry, a member of the commission from Tracadie, and Mike Logan, a human rights officer in the Campbellton office, made the public presentation on the Human Rights Commission, the *Human Rights Act* and the obligation employers have to accommodate people with a disability in the workplace. Arthur Harquail, a member of the commission from Edmundston, participated in the presentation.

(Multimedia)

During the presentation, it was explained that employers, service providers and landlords must not only treat everybody the same but also accommodate groups protected by the *Human Rights Act*. Employers, service providers and landlords have a duty to eliminate the discriminatory effect of uniform policies, practices and facilities on those groups, provided they can do so without incurring undue hardship. This duty applies to all the 14 grounds listed in the act, but most human rights complaints about accommodation concern physical and mental disability.

"The commission understands the importance of ensuring people are aware of their rights and obligations under the *Human Rights Act*," Commission chair Dr. Gordon L. Porter said. " So over the next year, the commission will hold similar information and consultation meetings in other areas of the province."

As a leader in the promotion and protection of human rights, the commission has two mandates: to handle complaints under the act, and to provide educational opportunities.

The commission is focused on providing a better service by improving the process used to handle complaints. Last year a process of early mediation was introduced, which has been very successful in providing parties an opportunity to settle their complaints.

A commitment to human rights supports the government's prosperity plan, so the commission has two main priorities for its educational mandate: to explain the duty to accommodate people with a disability, and to explain the business case for human rights.

During the two-day meeting, the commission also had a very productive meeting with Tracadie-Sheila Mayor Jean-Eudes Savoie. Information was exchanged on the initiatives related to human rights, and Savoie also provided information with respect to other municipal organizations that are available to partner with the commission.

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